



# NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY  
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

**TODD P. GRAVES**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **FORMER JOPLIN MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO TRAVELING FROM OKLAHOMA TO MISSOURI FOR SEX WITH A MINOR**

**SPRINGFIELD, Mo.** – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Miami, Okla., man pleaded guilty in federal court today to crossing the state line in order to have sex with a person he believed was a 14-year-old girl. In reality, Graves said, the “girl” was actually a law enforcement officer.

**Terry Wayne Wilson**, 33, of Miami, formerly of Joplin, Mo., pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Richard E. Dorr this afternoon to interstate travel for sex with a minor.

“An alert adult prevented what could have been a tragedy,” Graves said. “This defendant really believed that he had persuaded a 14-year-old girl to meet him for sex. Thanks to the intervention of an adult and the work of an undercover Webb City police officer, he was caught before that could happen.

“This case should serve as a warning for all parents to carefully monitor their children’s Internet activity,” Graves added. “Talk to your children about the rules for on-line safety, and how to respond to unwelcome or uncomfortable conversations. Parents are the first line of defense against Internet predators.”

By pleading guilty, **Wilson** admitted that he traveled from Oklahoma to Missouri on Dec. 4, 2003, with the intent to engage in a sexual act with a minor.

**Wilson** had actually contacted a 14-year-old girl on Nov. 25, 2003, Graves said, and that on-line chat message on the girl’s computer was observed by an adult. This discovery prevented the real 14-year-old girl from responding, but the adult participated in that chat for a period of time, pretending to be the girl. When the conversation turned to sexual matters, Graves said, the adult contacted law enforcement. An officer then assumed the online identity of the girl.

**Wilson** again contacted the “girl” in an online chat session on Dec. 4, 2003, and said he wanted to have sexual intercourse with her and perform other sex acts. **Wilson** arranged a meeting for approximately an hour later at the McDonald’s restaurant in Webb City, Mo. When he arrived at the McDonald’s restaurant and approached a target female, Graves said, he was arrested. **Wilson** was wearing the clothing he had described during the on-line chat session earlier that day, Graves said, carrying condoms in his pocket and a towel in his car, as he had also arranged during the on-line chat session.

**Wilson** told police officers that he found the girl’s name during a profile search. Her profile stated that she was 14 years old, he told police, which is why he decided to chat with her.

“The defendant told the arresting officers that he had chatted with underage girls before, and talked about sexual activity with them,” Graves said. “This underscores the need for parents to take steps to protect their children from becoming victims of sexual exploitation through the Internet’s open door into their own home.”

Under federal statutes, **Wilson** could be subject to a sentence of up to 30 years in federal prison without parole, plus a fine up to \$250,000. His sentence will be determined according to the United States Sentencing Guidelines. A sentencing hearing will be scheduled after the completion of a presentence investigation by the United States Probation Office.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Rose A. Barber. It was investigated by the Webb City, Mo., Police Department, the Joplin, Mo., Police Department, the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the Ottawa County, Mo., Sheriff’s Department, the Regional Computer Crimes Enforcement Group of the Greater St. Louis Area, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

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